

The Morning Astorian.

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THE VEIL IS YET UNLIFTED

All Channels of Information Are Closed From Seat of War.

THE CENSORSHIP INCREASED

Nothing Known in London Concerning Events Since the Arrival of Roberts and Kitchener.

LONDON, Jan. 14, 4 a. m.—The veil concealing the theater of war from the anxious eyes of Great Britain and the rest of the world is still unlifted.

It is impossible to doubt that this absolute closing of all channels of information is due to the censorship, the strictness of which has been redoubled since the landing of Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener, concerning whom nothing has transpired since the announcement of their arrival at Cape Town four days ago. The war office stated at midnight that no further news had been received from the front.

INDIGNATION RUNS HIGH

Sensational Talk in London Regarding Conduct of the War.

LONDON, Jan. 13.—The time has come when the people of Great Britain no longer keep silent regarding the mismanagement of the war.

The flood gates of criticism have been opened and under the stream of adverse comment pouring forth reputations are warring. The stern upbraiding of the government by papers that almost for a century have been conservative has already been touched upon in these dispatches.

Abuse of the war office has always existed and now it is only a few degrees more bitter than it was before. What chiefly marks the passing of the British from a period of passive discontent to most severe fault-finding is the outspoken abuse of their "generals in the field. There are unpleasant stories of fierce service jealousies and, in short, all the army's shortcomings which heretofore have been secretly whispered in clubs are this week finding their place in print, and not in disreputable journals, but in organs that a month ago would have fiercely denounced such tales as unpatriotic, whether they were true or otherwise.

It is now well known that General Buller despises Field Marshal Lord Roberts and hates General Lord Kitchener, that Lord Wolseley, the commander in chief, shares General Buller's feelings, and that Wolseley is scarcely on speaking terms with the secretary of state for war, Lord Lansdowne. To such a flagrant extent does this enmity go, that Lord Wolseley wrote to Lady Buller that he knew nothing about Lord Roberts' appointment to command the British troops in South Africa and that he disapproved of it.

Without enormous obstacles to overcome in the way of the Boers, strenuous resistance and initial advantages, this condition of affairs between the army leaders would constitute a stupendous drawback to the success of the British. One paper, usually well informed on service matters, declares it is quite likely that General Buller will throw up his command and come home and be a thorn in the side of the government. This is probably an exaggeration, but it is admitted on all sides that he is likely to make himself as disagreeable as possible to Lord Roberts.

As if this was not enough, it is openly said that General Lord Methuen has gone mad, that his mother died insane and that all his life he has been afraid he might share her fate. Hence it is added, his unceasing restlessness. Only this week a high cavalry officer returned from South Africa with complaints against Lord Methuen, that the general, during one of his first actions, had ordered him to advance with his cavalry and that upon the colonel sending the general word that his horses and men were too exhausted to be physically capable of doing so, Lord Methuen is reported to have said: "Well, you had better go to hell."

The officer to whom this remark was made has come home demanding a trial by court martial, but it is probable that he will not get it as he has been slated for another command.

Generals White, Gatacre, Clery and French all come in for their share of abuse and there is evidence presented that the senior generals are divided against themselves.

How all this will end if the campaign drags on much longer without serious change for the better, no one can tell. The resignation of Lord Wolseley would not surprise those who are cognizant of the inner work-

ings of the war office. A great victory would probably quiet the feelings of discontent till the day of reckoning in parliament arrived. But lacking that, there seems pending an upheaval which bodes ill for the government, the war office and some of the generals in the field, for these ranklings are current, not so much among the lower, sensation-loving classes, but among the highest born and most even-minded of Great Britain's best citizens.

Now is the discontent confined to the inaction of the generals. Several of the most powerful civilian factors in English life, some of them almost as much financially interested in the future of South Africa as the government itself, have repeatedly urged certain reforms in the methods of carrying on the war, not meddling with the purely military phases, but offering, for instance, to purchase horses for the Cape, pointing out a better method of transport, urging a more vigorous campaign, giving information as to the best routes towards the objective and supporting everything by expert witnesses brought, often at a great expense, from the Cape.

A representative of the Associated Press learns that a distinguished body, including a former governor and about a dozen men who have held civil, military or irregular positions of control during the recent troubles in South Africa, waited on Major General Ardagh, director of the military intelligence department of the war office, the very week previous to that which marked the three disasters to the British arms.

These men begged General Ardagh to accept certain offers and intimated that he had underestimated the opposing forces. The general listened and replied:

"Thank you, gentlemen. But you are wrong. We outnumber them at every point and we have got 'em like that." Thereupon General Ardagh banged his open palms together.

In spite of this discouraging reception the men referred to their repeated offers and the war office now seems to have awakened to the seriousness of the position and the officials are likely to accept one of the most daring projects ever undertaken, the full scope of which the Associated Press is not at liberty to disclose, but which if perfected will work independently of the war office, to achieve one of the most important British objectives.

The imperial yeomanry, after the first flush of public applause, is being gauged gingerly. It is dawning upon the minds of all that what Great Britain wants are crack shots and rough riders after the type of the American cavalryman, and frequent comments appear pointing out that the average yeoman who is a farmer does not come up to this standard while the average lordling, who adds brilliancy to the force, is not generally much nearer the mark in this respect than his yeoman tenant, that both have far less military training than the members of the volunteer force, and it is a fact that a large percentage of the enrolled imperial yeomen have never served even in the yeomanry.

What is being forced upon the war office is that 100 colonials accustomed to bushwhacking, cow punching and and scouting are worth 1000 English clerks and farmers.

To find instances of the appalling impracticality distinguishing the formation of Great Britain's irregular corps, it is only necessary to read the list of the kit being taken out by the city of London volunteers. The officers of this body carry to the plains of South Africa an air pillow, cork mattress, canvas basin, bath bucket, a tin box of candles, a lantern, a filter and a host of other implements that an American officer would burn before starting on a ten-mile march, while the men are laden down with four pairs of pants, four pairs of shoes, three caps, pajamas, two large turkish towels, a filter, a clothes brush and a writing portfolio, and other domestic articles. No wonder the British forces are not mobile!

The revival of "She Stoops to Conquer," Tuesday, and "A Midsummer Night's Dream," at Her Majesty's theater Wednesday, have given a decided impetus to the languid theatrical season. Both performances were decided successes. Beerbohm Tree surpassed himself in the productions which are pronounced to be the finest exhibition of staging and scenery ever seen in London.

In George Alexander's reconstructed St. James theater, which opens shortly with "Rupert of Hentzau," is a curious innovation for the suburbanites, in the shape of a room for gentlemen to don evening dresses.

GNVKKOO NI HENSHJLIM

NEW YORK, Jan. 13.—A dispatch to the Herald from London says: It now leaks out that Lord Kitchener is really the chief in South Africa at the head of the British troops and Lord Roberts a figurehead.

HAS BRYAN RECANTED?

COLUMBIA, Mo., Jan. 13.—W. J. Bryan when questioned tonight regarding the statement of the Boston Commercial Bulletin that he had changed his views on the subject of free wool declared that he wished to deny all such reports.

BALFOUR IS IN BAD ODOR

His Frivolity in the Face of the Nation's Peril Resented.

KITCHENER NOW LOOKED TO

He Will Be Honored as a Second Wellington if He Brings War to a Favorable End.

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LONDON, Jan. 12.—The frivolity displayed in his recent speeches by Mr. Balfour, the government leader in the house of commons, has landed what has been known as the strongest government of modern times in a slough from which extrication is difficult, if not doubtful.

His light-hearted remarks, which were pleasantly accepted by the nation when times were good and all was well, are offensive to a people mourning for lost sons and deeply angered by unprecedented reverses.

Balfour, if he had tried, could not have more successfully put his countrymen on edge and when Lord Salisbury speaks he will have much to atone for. The memory of Chamberlain's "alliance" speech was not dying away before Balfour put his foot still deeper in mire.

The Associated Press learns that Lord Salisbury believes the salvation of Great Britain's military system depends on General Lord Kitchener, in whom he has long had implicit faith. It has already been planned that if Lord Roberts and Kitchener bring the campaign to a successful termination, the latter will be brought home to honor almost equal to the Duke of Wellington.

He will be put into the war office and will be given a free hand to brush away the cobwebs which clog the British army.

CRISIS OF THE CAMPAIGN.

Speculations of London Clubs as to What Buller is Attempting.

NEW YORK, Jan. 13.—Discussing the Anglo-Boer war situation, the London Times correspondent says:

"No further news has yet been issued with regard to General Buller's flank movement, but general feeling as expressed in this morning's newspapers is one of hope rather than anxiety. Buller is apparently attempting the turning movement west of Colenso which nearly all military experts were expecting when his first battle was fought, on December 15, directly in front.

The military writers have assumed during the last fortnight that there would be a turning movement but that it would be east of Colenso from Weenen. Some of these experts cling with tenacity to their theory yesterday and described the Potgieter demonstration as a feint designed to distract Joubert's attention from the real point of attack at the other end of the line, but this explanation was not borne out by General Buller's own presence at Springfield.

He had probably been waiting for the completion of his mule transport service which would enable him to carry the main body of his army away from the railroad base of supplies and fight day after day on the enemy's flank until a junction could be effected with White's army.

The veterans also suggested that he might have lingered in his camp until General Roberts' arrival at Cape Town in order to allow the new commander in chief the privilege of vetoing at the last moment the proposed plan of campaign. Whatever was the precise cause of his inaction, General Buller was at last in the saddle and a second battle or series of battles would be fought for the relief of Ladysmith.

Singularly enough the only previous reference to this western turning movement which had appeared in print was in a dispatch from the Boer camp at Colenso. It was a vague rumor that the British were building a railway from Free camp toward Potgieter's drift. The occupation of the south bank of the Tugela at that point by the British could not have been a surprise to the Boers. The drift is at the apex of the long bend or loop and back of it are low ranges of kopjes with broken country all the way to Ladysmith.

A turning movement east of Colenso would have threatened the main line of the Boer communication northward but would have left the Free State troops free to retire westward to their own frontier. A turning movement west of Colenso by Potgieter's drift if successful would cut off the direct line of retreat of the Free State burghers to their mountain passes, but would not block their

way northward unless General White should attack in the rear.

The clubs were crowded with loungers last night eager to hear the important news which they were confident would come before morning. There was an unwonted air of bustle and cheerfulness at the war office. But hour after hour passed without disclosures. There was a general conviction that the crisis of the campaign had come and that General Buller was in a position to retrieve his reputation by a series of great strokes.

The dangerous character of this flank movement by which his own camp at Chevelly would be exposed to a counter act by the Dutch was also discerned, and the probability of a series of desperate battles sobered every one. The process of reconstructing the cabinet which has been the chief employment of the marplots and pessimists was suspended until Buller could be heard from.

The message which would clarify or doom to fresh disappointment the English people had not come at midnight. As the names in the casualty list of the Ladysmith battle represent eighteen military organizations, it is clear that nearly the whole garrison was engaged in the seventeen hours fighting. This list disposes effectually of the Boer estimates of losses which General Buller took needless pains to correct. Those losses would evidently have killed Gen. White's men were forced to spare their ammunition.

A Boer telegram from Pretoria now admits that while the burghers were successful at the beginning of the storming of the plateau at Ladysmith, on the seventh, subsequently they were compelled to abandon two of their positions.

From Boer advices it appears that last Sunday at Colobeng the British were beaten back with loss. A Berlin telegram to the Standard says the summoning of an international conference to discuss and conclude a convention on international maritime law to be signed by the powers interested in the matter is now under consideration.

The text of Lord Salisbury's reply to the American government seems to alter the opinion of experts in international law on one point. Lord Salisbury has not set a bad precedent for the United Kingdom, which in any future war with a European power will have no neutral Delagoa bay, whereas every continental power will have neutral territory bordering upon it.

He has ruled that breadstuffs are not contraband of war unless destined for the enemy's forces. This decision exempts foodstuffs not specifically designed for any army or fleet and is in accord with the naval orders given the American cruisers during the war with Spain.

Lord Salisbury's action while based upon rulings of English courts is wholly in accord with the continuous American practice which discriminates between provisions for the ordinary use of life in the enemy's country and provisions for military or navy use.

THE ELM BRANCH SAFE.

SEATTLE, Jan. 13.—The British tramp steamer Elm Branch, reported as being disabled off Cape Flattery, is safe in port at Port Townsend. She was picked up at her perilous anchorage last night by the tug Tyee and towed in this morning.

GETTING READY FOR THE FRAY

Republican National Committee Laying Plans for Campaign.

"PROSPERITY — EXPANSION"

These Will Be the Issues and McKinley Will Be Selected to Carry Them to Victory.

PHILADELPHIA, Jan. 12.—The sub-committee of the republican national committee today began laying plans for the work of the presidential campaign. Shortly after 9 o'clock the committee visited Mayor Ashbridge. In the party were Senator Hanna, chairman; "Joe" Manley, H. C. Payne, of Wisconsin; Senator N. B. Scott, of West Virginia; Richard Kerans, of Missouri, and Charles Dick, of Ohio, secretary of the national committee.

The committee went to the exposition to inspect the auditorium in which the convention is to be held. All the visitors expressed their satisfaction at the selection of the hall. Senator Hanna, regarding the convention said:

"Of course President McKinley will be renominated, and without doubt he will receive every vote in the convention, but when it comes to choosing his running mate and deciding on platform there is likely to be abundance of excitement."

During the conference with Mayor Ashbridge, Senator Hanna made the first statement which he has uttered in his capacity as national republican chairman on the issues and plans of the coming campaign. He said: "First, the national issue will be the prosperity of the working people of the country, and second, the retention of the Philippines. The republican party is in pressing and immediate need of funds to carry on the work of the campaign and it must be begun without a moment's delay.

"The democratic party has labor agitators at work throughout the West and the republican campaign committee finds it necessary to meet them at every point."

STRANGE SUICIDE.

Canadian Kills Himself Because He Cannot Fight the Boers.

WINNIPEG, Man., Jan. 13.—A Regina dispatch says that Corporal Lindsay of the Northwest mounted police force went there from Battleford to join the second Canadian contingent now being enlisted for service in the South African campaign. His father and brother were both killed in the Boer war and he was anxious to avenge their deaths. Unfortunately he could not pass the doctor. Despondency came over him and today he shot and killed himself.

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